

REMARKS

Claims 15-19, 22-26 and 28 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 15-19 and 22-26 are amended and independent claim 28 is added. Support for the amendments to these claims, particularly the claim 28 feature regarding a negative pressure, may be found on page 5, line 17 - page 6, line 2 of the original disclosure, for example. No new matter is added. Claims 14 and 27 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited in those claims. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiners Tai and Michener during the September 28, 2009 personal interview. The reasons presented during the personal interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the following remarks, which constitute Applicants' written record of the interview.

The Office Action rejects claims 14-19 and 22-27 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. As agreed during the personal interview, the amendments to the claims obviate the rejection. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as allegedly not being supported by the application's original disclosure. As agreed during the personal interview, the amendments to claims 15 and 16 obviate the rejection. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 14-19, 22, 24, 26 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0116185 to Oswald in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,066,796 to Itoyama, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,582,249 to Boeck and in evidence of U.S. Patent No. 6,676,459 to Mukai. During the personal interview, Examiner Tai agreed that Mukai is only applied against dependent claim 19. The Office Action rejects

claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Oswald, Itoyama and Boeck, in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,880,401 to Shima; and rejects claim 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Oswald, Itoyama and Boeck in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,721,948 to Brandt. The rejections are moot with respect to canceled claims 14 and 27, and are respectfully traversed with respect to the remaining claims. The following discussion explains why the references would not have rendered obvious newly-added independent claim 28.

The Office Action generally relies on Oswald as disclosing a photovoltaic cell including a vacuum, relies on Itoyama as disclosing an external connector and relies on Boeck as disclosing a raised portion. The combination of these references would not have suggested any feature that can reasonably be considered to correspond to the recited internal volume is at a negative pressure with respect to an ambient pressure, promoting the contact between the internal end of the blade conductor and the free end of the connecting conductor, as recited in claim 28.

Oswald discloses that a chamber formed due to the separation of the substrates can be at a partial vacuum (paragraph [0026]). Oswald does not disclose, however, that the partial vacuum may promote contact between an internal end of a blade conductor and a free end of a connecting conductor. Rather, Oswald only discusses a vacuum embodiment in a brief sentence in paragraph [0026]. That paragraph further discloses that, although the chamber may be at a partial vacuum, the chamber is preferably formed with air.

The Office Action appears to acknowledge that Oswald and Itoyama do not disclose that "the electrical contact [is] formed by pressure from the internal under-pressure and a raised portion" (as previously recited in canceled claim 14). New independent claim 28 similarly recites that the internal volume is at a negative pressure with respect to an ambient pressure, promoting the contact between the internal end of the blade conductor and the free

end of the connecting conductor. The Office Action relies on Boeck as supplying the missing subject matter. The Office Action's reliance on Boeck is misplaced for the following reasons.

First, if one had modified Oswald based on Boeck, one would have modified the exit conductors in Oswald and not any conductors within an internal volume. Fig. 6 of Boeck shows how a gel seal is used to seal the foil conductor at an exit point of the apparatus. That is, Fig. 6 of Boeck shows how foil conductors exit the apparatus. Fig. 6 does not show how foil conductors, inside an internal volume at a negative pressure, contact each other.

In view of the above, one would not have predictably modified the internal conductors in Oswald based on the disclosure of Boeck. At most, if one had modified Oswald based on Boeck, one would have modified the device so that the exit conductors 12 are sealed with a gel seal (Fig. 1 of Oswald; Fig. 6 of Boeck). One would not have included a raised portion in these exit conductors so that contact between the conductors is promoted by the internal volume at a negative pressure.

Second, if combined with Oswald, Boeck discloses the use of a spring, and not the use of negative pressure, to maintain the gel seal in position. Boeck discloses that spring elements 57 are used to exert pressure on the partial seals 51 and 51' (col. 5, lines 59-65). Boeck also discloses that "pressure in the interior of the housing 2 can be compensated with the aid of the diaphragm 14" (col. 4, lines 18-20). In no case does Boeck disclose that the contact between a connecting conductor and a blade conductor is promoted by negative pressure in the internal volume. Thus, Boeck does not supply the subject matter missing in Oswald and Itoyama.

Mukai, Shima and Brandt also do not supply the subject matter missing in Oswald and Itoyama.

During the September 28, 2009 personal interview, Applicants' representative presented claim amendments similar to the above claim amendments, as well as the above

arguments, to the Examiners. Regarding the §103 rejections, the Examiners indicated that the claim amendments appear to overcome the current rejections. The Examiners asserted, however, that they could not give a final indication of whether the claim amendments would overcome the rejections without further reviewing the applied references in detail.

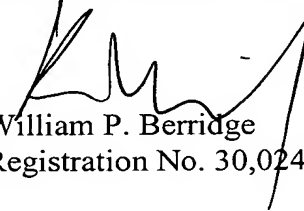
In view of the above, the applied references would not have rendered obvious the combination of features recited in independent claim 28. Thus, the applied references would not have rendered obvious the subject matter recited in the dependent claims for at least their dependence on claim 28, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the obviousness rejections are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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